Half-Life 2 RTX Is Exactly What You'd Expect: A Soulless Lightshow

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Like poetry, the trailer begins by showing off the former dark and spooky Ravenholm now being flooded with bloom and volumetric fog.

The grass looks like Papier-mâché. Dirt floors have a reflection of plastic. Many interiors originally designed with moody lighting in mind are now practically pitch black. Props are redesigned with a sterile appearance and each texture on them probably sits at a gloriously unoptimized ~500 MB.

Gunplay is a smoke show and the weapon sounds have lost their iconic touch. The zombies look like balloon people, and of course the trailer ultimately ends with blinding flames and explosions blasting your vision.

This is my first impression of the Half-Life 2 RTX trailer. It's everything one could've expected from a modern video game remaster. All the graphics, the bombastic cinematics, and none of the age.

Just like all the RTX/remaster nonsense that came before it, one can expect HL2 RTX to age like milk – looking good for about a year before people realize nothing beats the original.

Remember: everything is chrome in the future.

On the contrary...

On this rare occurrence in which you actually see me speaking positively of RTX, here's a version that doesn't totally defecate on the art style. Half-Life 1 RTX.
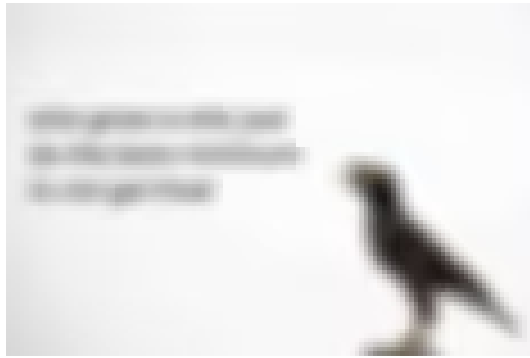
You've still got classic Half-Life 1, but it retains (dare I say, improves!) the moody lighting that defines the classic dark and gritty science fiction spirit of the game.

Unfortunately, it still suffers from odd "muh cinematics" choices. Lens dirt doesn't belong in Half-Life 1. The bloom is blinding. Some areas suffer from "we need absurdly bright light rays emitting from equipment located underneath the floor because it leaves very obvious visible shadows because this technology is so cool" syndrome. (see 2:53)

The outside area introduced at 26:50 in the video is utterly destroyed by terrible lighting. WHY is it so foggy? Dearest modders and developers, please control yourselves. Let the players actually see so they can identify enemies and areas of interest.

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